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have someone come back a real hero, and, although such a promise to torture oneself could be made in regard to other relatives, "it was usually a sister who thought so much of her brother who did that." Other forms of sacrifice which a girl might practice on her brother's behalf would be to take a fine robe, or something else of value, and stick it on top of the lodge saying: "I offer this that my brother may come back with good luck, bringing something fine from war." This could be even more specific in that a girl could offer, say, the tip of her finger, if her brother would bring back a particular thing, such as a scalp or a horse or a weapon. Again, should her brother be ill or wounded, a woman would be exceedingly concerned and might go so far, as in one case recorded, of promising that if he should recover she would join the Women's Lodge—"which was considered a great thing to do for your brother."

Usually a man would have some voice in regard to his sister's marriage and, if he were the one who made the arrangements, he received the larger share of the bride-price. It was said, too, that a brother would be especially concerned regarding his younger sister's moral conduct and might take it upon himself to keep her in line. Although parents would feel the disgrace of an erring daughter, a brother was expected to react violently. If her husband failed to punish his wife for adultery, her brother could kill her. Some instances were given, too, in which the man took his own life indirectly, by riding into the midst of the enemy without taking any precautions, because he felt so keenly the dishonor his sister who was unfaithful had imposed on him.

MATERNAL UNCLE AND PATERNAL AUNT

"Because a brother and a sister thought so much of each other, they were expected to be good to each other's children." If a woman had several brothers, it was the eldest who assumed the duties of the maternal uncle and his relationship with his nephews was a direct one. Should the eldest brother be unable to undertake the responsibility another brother or male cousin was expected to do so.

The maternal uncle was supposed to watch his sister's children closely even though her husband was on the scene. If he did not

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861 approve of the way they were being raised, he could remove a sister's son from the parental home and keep him. The parents would have to let him go. Thick told of his own experience in this regard. One day at the time when he was nine or ten years old, his mother's brother came and told his brother-in-law: "I am taking my nephew. You folks are not training him to be a man." So his uncle took Thick away and raised him very strictly. He was made to work very hard and his uncle did not hesitate to lecture him and to administer severe tongue-lashings. His uncle's wife would occasionally intervene in the attempt to bring about a more lenient attitude toward the boy, especially as Thick got older, but all to no avail. Finally, when Thick had become a young man, he could not stand it any longer and rebelled. He has never forgotten that after all those years of what amounted practically to servitude, his uncle did not give him a single horse nor any other presents, although he showered Thick's elder brother with good things, especially with horses.

604 In case the maternal uncle was well-off, and his sister and her husband in bad straits, the uncle was more or less obliged to take the responsibility for his nephew. If he did not do so, people would say he had neglected his duty. Furthermore, if a boy were lazy and consistently refused to obey his own father, he might be ejected from his home, and it would be up to his maternal uncle to take him in. One case was cited, too, of a boy who was neglected by his parents, and whose uncle not only took him in, but acted as though he thought more of his nephew than he did of his own sons.

[855]

Whether or not the maternal uncle insisted on taking full charge, he had the right of disciplining his nephew, reprimanding him when he failed to measure up, but at the same time he had the obligation of protecting and shielding him in public. While a father could, and sometimes did, disown his son, the boy could be sure of a refuge with his mother's brother, although he faced severe punishment in private at his uncle's hands. Thus a young man who was in difficulties, over say a love affair, would seek out his uncle. Should he be threatened by a husband who suspected the young man of fooling around his wife, the uncle could be counted upon to invite the irate husband, smooth over the situation, and in

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at the time whether she would ever have a chance to acquire more of these highly desirable decorations." On the other hand, a maternal uncle would not refuse his niece or her husband anything it was in his power to give, and would always lend them horses or other kinds of property when requested. 604

Compared with the responsibilities of the maternal uncle, a paternal aunt had relatively few obligations to her nephews and nieces but correspondingly more to their mother, her brother's wife. Nevertheless it was she who took particular interest in her brother's children when they were infants. She showed regard for her brother by providing, if possible, the sack for the newborn baby and the goods to pay the medicine man in case it were necessary to call one to the child-bed of her sister-in-law. If the child became ill she, too, usually paid for the necessary doctoring and it was not unusual for her and her husband to assume the expense of a formal naming feast for the infant. [554] [553]

The paternal aunt had the duty of "bawling out" her brother's daughters if they misbehaved. In regard to property, a niece would have to ask permission before using anything of her aunt, but the request was always granted. The aunt would tell her niece in an offhand way: "Well, why don't you go get it!". Whereas if someone not in that relationship had made the request, she would have gotten the object and handed it to her. A woman was expected to be as reserved with her aunt as she would be with her own mother and with her mother-in-law. A man was even more respectful to his aunt in the sense that he would not speak to her unnecessarily nor look directly at her. [861]

When a girl married, the paternal aunt sometimes participated in the bride-price, and claimed her niece's husband as "son-in-law." According to Garter Snake: "When Otter Robe's oldest sister married, the groom gave three horses, one of which went to the bride's father, one to her brother, and the third to her father's sister. The latter made for her niece's husband a fine fancy robe, treating him with the same consideration she would have accorded her own daughter's husband. Then, when this 'son-in-law' returned successfully from a raiding party, he gave his 'mother-in-law' one of the horses he had captured." It is interesting to note [583]

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857 were shooting. "Just as I leaned down to pick up the arrows
526 which had been bet and fairly won, one of the other boys got mad
578 and shot at me. The arrow hit my hand and I bear the scar to
this day. On another occasion at the same kind of game, my partner and I won, and one of the boys of the opposing couple hit both of us over the head with his bow. My people always discouraged me from fighting—I was a shy boy in any case—but my partner took the bow away from one of our opponents and in turn hit him over the head. The opponent ran home and reported to his parents. His mother was the kind who took up for her sons and so she came toward my partner and me. My partner was still angry and called out to the woman: 'We are going to shoot you with our arrows if you come any closer!' Whereupon the woman turned around and went back without saying anything. When our parents heard of this, however, both my partner and I were given a good tongue-lashing for having threatened a woman."

857 In summer, boys of the same band playing together as a group
578 expected a fight if they came in contact with a group from another band. While sometimes they used bows and arrows in this type of fighting, more often they used mud balls propelled from the end of a willow stick about three feet long. Thick gave the following account of one of these battles in which he participated as a boy.

"One summer day I was with my band group, the Frozens. We expected we might be raided, so we had already prepared mud balls and were modeling clay figures—horses, buffalo, men, and so on—when the Upper Quarters gang attacked. We Frozens grabbed our sticks and mud balls and ran into a coulee and then turned on the Upper Quarters. As the latter approached they protected themselves by holding their robes up in front of their faces, since the mud balls were aimed at their heads. Jim Shortman happened to be the member of the Upper Quarters who was 'bravest' and in the lead. I aimed at him and Jim put up his robe and warded off the shot; but Dwarf, who was right beside me, threw a mud ball immediately after I had and hit Jim right in the eye, breaking the skin and knocking him down. When they saw the blood, Jim ran home and the others, especially Dwarf, were scared. When Dwarf saw Jim's father coming toward

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

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among men. It was a severe ordeal and the older men had no mercy on these youngsters. 857
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Occasionally as training in bravery, the heart of a bear was taken raw and cut into small bits. After calling together the older boys and young men and lining them up, each one in turn was given a bit of the heart dipped in fresh blood and asked: "Well, are you going to have a brave heart?" Some were able to swallow it easily, but others could not stomach it. Those who were able to swallow and retain it were said to be the really brave ones. 262

It was indicated by many informants that in the old days a man would almost have to have had supernatural powers in order to be outstandingly successful in war or to achieve fame as a medicine man. In fact it was thought that supernatural powers could be helpful in many aspects of life including gambling and love. Guardians, however, used to warn the boys and young men under their care that "you can't get something for nothing." By this was meant that a person who accepted supernatural power would not live out his full span of life. Thus, according to The Boy, parents emphasized in training their sons that, rather than going on power quests, they should be ambitious to acquire fame and respect by developing their natural abilities. Nevertheless many sought and obtained supernatural powers, visions apparently often being vouchsafed in youth, although the power might not have been used until later in life. It was believed that those who accepted and used such supernatural powers died prematurely. 787
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METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Oral instruction, or "lecturing," stands out in the Gros Ventre mind as the most important method of child training. All of our middle-aged and older informants agreed that some relative, often either the mother or the father, lectured their children almost every day, telling them what was right and what was wrong and "how to live." If boys and girls were present together, there were some subjects which could not be touched upon and would be reserved for fathers to speak about to their sons and for mothers 861

* It was said that, in the distant past, the heart of an enemy was so devoured by warriors. For historical confirmation, see Henry, v. 2, p. 734. 266

* Full discussion of supernatural powers is given in Cooper Ms., 1949.

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861 to their daughters.¹⁰ The lecturing of the child started when he was an infant and continued until adulthood had been attained. Those charged with the training of children felt it to be a duty. As Coming Daylight put it: "They talked to their children right from the start, and before the babies themselves were able to talk, they seemed to understand." Singer remarked that, because modern parents do not talk to infants as the old-fashioned ones used to do, present-day infants do not respond by trying to "talk back." Nowadays, the two old women insisted, even infants pay no attention to instruction, and as for older children, some go so far as to tell their elders to shut up!

Under the old regime, however, a child had to listen, whether he wanted to or not, and he had to retain, at least outwardly, a respectful attitude. Cora, for instance, said that she hated this being talked to. Her father was the one who did the lecturing in her family and he used to require that she stand in one spot and not move "while he preached about being good and the ways of doing everything." Singer and Coming Daylight admitted that it was tiresome for the child to be continuously lectured, but they insisted that this is the best way for children to learn. Children [856] are supposed to really grasp what is being said to them from about the age of four.

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183 Thick remembers the general content of the lectures he heard from his mother to have run along these lines: "If you get a mare, treat it well because mares will increase. Take good care of her. If you get a saddle, hang on to it. Robes, bridles, whips, are needed useful articles, keep them, don't give them away. If you don't keep these things you will have to go and borrow from someone else. That is bad. If you have to borrow a horse from some other boy, his family might become suspicious of you; yet if they refuse, there are hard feelings over it. Therefore when you get something, take good care of it.

"When you go out to play with your own things, your bow and arrows or hoop, others will want you to play with them and to bet with them. If you join in such games, somebody is likely to get mad because you have won and so he may beat you up. If

¹⁰ For details on kinship behavior, see pp. 107-08.

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trimming for women's clothing. I knew that the body of a girl had been among those left in the branches of the trees at this place, so I decided that the bear had disturbed the bodies and must have eaten the cloth along with everything else. I stood there quite a while wondering whether I should take those elk teeth. Finally I took them and having strung them on a piece of sinew laid them in the stream-bed with a rock covering them. When I went home I opened the matter with my grandmother by stating: 'A bear ate that girl who was buried in the elk tooth dress.' When my grandmother asked how I knew this, I told her about the elk teeth in the excrement. Whereupon my grandmother asked: 'Why didn't you take those teeth? They are valuable.' Feeling easier in my mind, I said: 'I was afraid you would accuse me of stealing them—but I did take them anyway!' My grandmother was glad and so I brought them from the creek and I was happy, too, since there were enough teeth to make two rows on my dress." 183 685 867

The usual procedure of careful parents when a child reported he had found some article was to first question him as to whether or not he had taken it from someone. Then the parent would go around and ask people if they had lost this certain article. If a child had stolen it he would thus be found out and it was believed that he would never steal anything again.

The rights of children to their own property were recognized by elders and, while they admonished children to take good care of their things, if a child wished to dispose of what belonged to him no one would reprimand him for having done so. After all, generosity is a trait that was much admired among the Gros Ventres. Informants said that if, for instance, a man had given a horse to his daughter and she gave it away, he would say nothing to her about it. Should she ask him for another he might, however, tell her: "Well, I don't know—you might give it away." But he would never scold her about it. 183 858 867 421

Even if a child were flagrantly disobedient he would ordinarily be punished only by a scolding rather than by whipping or deprivation. Singer and Coming Daylight both were shocked at the idea that a child might be punished by depriving him of something. They said: "Indians love their children and we don't think they would deprive them of anything. They just talk to their children 861

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86 and tell them what is right." Coming Daylight gave an account of an occasion on which she was disobedient. "One of my relatives was very ill—and my grandmother thought that if I would sacrifice a finger joint, he would get well. But I was a small girl, and I dreaded the idea of having part of my finger cut off, so I ran away. My uncle chased after me and told me never to come back. I yelled at him: 'I won't come back, but I am not going to have my finger cut off!' So I went far off and stayed out in the hills until my uncle came looking for me and brought me home again. Two nights after they had asked me to give up my finger, the relative died, but they didn't punish me."

[858] If a child were really lazy or "pouted too much," he might be "thrown out"—cases were mentioned where this had actually happened. The theory was that the child would then have to work much harder than he would have at home for whoever would take him in.

In the case of temper tantrums on the part of a very young child, he was first simply told to stop. Should he continue, his guardian would say: "Oh well, he doesn't know any better" and then douse him with cold water. It was said that he would get up immediately after that type of treatment, and would soon be cured.

If a child were naughty or made a mistake, his guardian would usually not reprimand him in public. He would wait for an opportunity to get him alone. As an example, in training for proper attitudes and behavior between brother and sister, the boy was told: "Be careful what you say in front of your sister." If the boy then made some remark he should not have made in the presence of his sister, his mother waited until the sister had gone out and then talked to him in a gentle way. Cora expanded on this by stating: "The Gros Ventres never bawl out anybody in front of a third party. This is where the white social workers make their biggest mistake. They get everybody together in a central place and then proceed to reprimand the various ones in front of all the others. That is the worst thing that can happen—it hurts these Gros Ventres so badly."

[648] Nevertheless, those in authority may give a severe "tongue lashing" to the culprit in private. As The Boy said when discussing discipline: "The Indian, when he was living the old life, had a

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system of discipline, but it was not like that of the white man. 861
 The Indian used his roaring voice and stinging words. When I was a boy there was one old man who had a crippled hand. On various occasions when we were told to keep quiet and we disregarded that appeal, that old man would sneak up to us and roar at us. Sometimes he would bluff mischievous boys by telling them: 'Come over here. I am going to work you over with this crippled hand,' but nobody would dare go near him. Then he would say: 'Well, give me one arrow apiece. I won't work you over this time—but next time I will surely do so!'

The bugaboo was used to threaten small children when they misbehaved. They were told that "someone" would come and take them away in a big sack. The story told by Singer and Coming Daylight regarding the bugaboo was that of a woman who put her disobedient son outside her lodge and this "someone" came along with a sack, put the child in it and hung the sack in a tree. Aside from this bugaboo, Coming Daylight could recall only one instance from her childhood where she was threatened through reference to "spirits." This was after she had swam the whole width of the Missouri River and back. She was, and still is, very proud of this feat, but her grandmother was angry with her for having been too bold in going so far. She scolded her saying: "Why did you do that? Don't you know there are all kinds of 'animals' in the deep water? They always grab what they want!" Sometimes, however, punishment in the form of "something awful will happen" was indicated for the wrong doer.

One point on which Coming Daylight and the other old women were extremely emphatic was that in the old days the Gros Ventre never tried to scare children by mentioning the Supreme Being 183
 in connection with punishment. These old women recalled that in 861
 the lectures they heard, and in the scoldings they received, the [778]
 emphasis was much more on social motivation. Children were told: "Nobody will like you if you do so and so." Or: "People don't like anyone who is onery. They like those who are generous and kind." Self-regarding motives were stressed in some situations. "Don't gamble lest you lose something we value," "Do what is right so as to keep your man," "Be industrious so as to show off what a good worker you are," "Don't run around with

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183 other men so you will avoid your husband's suspicion," and so on.
 861 Sometimes the appeal was made by a parent: "If you do such
 and such a thing well, I will be proud of you." In general it
 would seem that the positive side rather than the negative, was
 stressed.

777 It was more often the men informants who mentioned super-
 867 natural motives proposed for proper conduct. They remembered
 888 that they were told that the Supreme Being would "have pity" on
 them if they followed the proper code of behavior. Both men and
 women mentioned, however, that respect for the aged was in-
 stilled because "people didn't become old for nothing. They had a
 blessing from the Supreme Being to live long lives. Whenever
 you see old people attempting to do something and are having
 difficulties, you should go right in and do it for them. Help old
 people out and then ask them to intercede for you that you will
 have good health, a long life and success in all your undertakings."

867 The example of others was recognized as effective in child-
 574 training. Al feels that the Gros Ventres were well brought up in
 the old days "because children were taught to stick to the rules
 and they had the good example of adults to follow." In describ-
 ing the duty of hospitality, Coming Daylight said: "My grand-
 mother was a great one to have a lot of visitors because she was
 generous, and so I got a good example at home." It was said by
 others of Coming Daylight: "She feeds everyone who comes
 along just as she used to see her uncle (mother's brother) do.
 She takes after her uncle in lots of ways."

In lecturing to the young, examples of actual behavior of per-
 sons, both good and bad, were often given. For instance, in
 warning boys of the evils of gambling, reference would be made to
 men who would otherwise have had promising careers but who
 ruined their chances by too heavy stakes which they lost. Fear
 [DS4] of offending those who had supernatural power lest they retaliate
 by means of black magic was implicit in at least some of the ad-
 monitions. This was so, for instance, in instructing young men
 to stay away from the wives of "powerful" men, as well as in
 warning girls to decline improper proposals "in a nice way."